



# **Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks**

1400 South 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Bozeman, MT 59718

January 29, 2015

To: Governor's Office, Tim Baker, State Capitol, Room 204, P.O. Box 200801, Helena, MT 59620  
Environmental Quality Council, State Capitol, Room 106, P.O. Box 201704, Helena, MT 59620  
Dept. of Environmental Quality, Metcalf Building, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901  
Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation, P.O. Box 201601, Helena, MT 59620-1601  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks:

Director's Office	Parks Division	Lands Section	FWP
Commissioners			
Fisheries Division	Legal Unit	Wildlife Division	Design &
Construction			

MT Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, P.O. Box 201202, Helena, MT 59620

MT State Parks Association, P.O. Box 699, Billings, MT 59103

MT State Library, 1515 E. Sixth Ave., P.O. Box 201800, Helena, MT 59620

James Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, P.O. Box 1184, Helena, MT 59624

Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624

George Ochenski, P.O. Box 689, Helena, MT 59624

Jerry DiMarco, P.O. Box 1571, Bozeman, MT 59771

Montana Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 1175, Helena, MT 59624

Wayne Hurst, P.O. Box 728, Libby, MT 59923

Jack Jones, 3014 Irene St., Butte, MT 59701

Jack Atcheson, 2309 Hancock Avenue, Butte MT 59701

Beaverhead Conservation District, 420 Barrett Street, Dillon, MT 59725

U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, 1520 E 6th Avenue, Helena, MT 59601

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 585 Shepard Way, Suite 1, Helena, MT 59601

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 420 Barrett Street, Dillon, MT 59725

Big Hole Watershed Committee, Box 21, Divide, MT 59727

Montana Trout Unlimited, P.O. Box 7186, Missoula, MT 59807

Dan Vermillion, FWP Commissioner, 13 Kindsfather Dr., Livingston MT 59047

Earnest and Colleen Bacon, 2215 Fishtrap Creek Road, Wisdom, MT 59761

Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation, 730 N. Montana Street, Dillon, MT 59725-9424

George Grant Chapter of Trout Unlimited, P.O. Box 563, Butte, MT 59703

Skyline Sportsmen, P.O. Box 173, Butte, MT 59703

Anaconda Sportsmen, 2 Cherry, Anaconda, MT 59711

James Patrick Warfield, 3323 Twin Oaks Dr., Napa, CA 94558-5321

PGP Revocable Trust, Pam Durcell Trustee, Denver, CO 80220-6332

Paradise Valley Community Church, 1755 E. River Rd., Livingston, MT 59047-8715

Richard M. & Marianne K. Morgan, 1374 Clubview Blvd. S., Columbus, OH 43235-1643

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Decision Notice (DN) has been prepared for the proposed closure of Shed's Bridge Fishing Access Site (FAS). The FAS is located along the Gallatin River 7 miles west of Bozeman, Montana.

Affected by extensive erosion, FWP proposes to close the Shed's Bridge FAS until such time as an action plan for the river in this area can be implemented to ensure the safety of visitors.

Based on the Environmental Assessment, public comment, and FWP evaluation, it is my decision to proceed with the proposed action, Alternative B as described in the Shed's Bridge Fishing Access Site Proposed Closure Draft Environmental Assessment, with Shed's Bridge FAS remaining closed until such time as an action plan for the river in this area can be implemented to ensure the safety of visitors.

If you have any questions about the proposal, please call Ray Heagney at (406) 994-4042.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,



Sam B. Sheppard  
Region Three Supervisor

Attachment



Region Three Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
1400 South 19<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Bozeman, MT 59718

January 16, 2015  
Decision Notice for:

**Shed's Bridge Fishing Access Site  
Proposed Closure  
Draft Environmental Assessment**

**Proposed Action**

The Shed's Bridge Fishing Access Site (FAS) is located in Gallatin County, along the Gallatin River, seven miles west of Bozeman on Montana Highway 84. Beginning in the spring of 2011 the river bank at this site has continued to experienced severe erosion leaving a steep slope and near vertical 14-foot terrace. The terrace extends along the river's edge onto private property from approximately 100 feet upstream from the FAS to a point 150 feet downstream from the site. Routine inspections find the river bank to be unstable and any attempt to restore or stabilize it for safe public use may have detrimental impacts to the private landowners upstream and downstream of the FAS.

The proposal is to permanently close the site until an action plan can be developed to address the unstable conditions of the river bank. The Fish and Wildlife Commission has approved a formal environment review process, allowing for public comment on the proposed permanent closure of Shed's Bridge FAS.

Public use of Shed's Bridge FAS is very low. River access can be gained upstream just off secondary Hwy 84 onto River Road, a county maintained road, that parallels the Gallatin River. The county road provides adequate river access and suitable parking for anglers.

The site is currently posted as closed with cautionary signs warning of the unstable river bank. At the conclusion of the environmental review process the FWP commission will have a final vote on the closure.

## **Montana Environmental Policy Act**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess significant potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environment. In compliance with MEPA, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for the proposed project by FWP and released for public comment on February 7, 2011.

Public comments on the proposed project were taken from December 12, 2014 through January 12, 2015. The EA was mailed to 68 groups and individuals.

## **Summary of Public Comment**

FWP received one (1) comment, which was opposed to the proposed action.

## **Comment opposing the proposed project: one (1) total.**

### **Example of Comment Statements Opposing the Proposal**

"I hate to see you totally close this site, I would rather you just post it "as hazardous conditions may be found" and call it good for now. I know stabilizing the bank is going to be costly, but that's what needs to be done, not only for this site but also to help the neighboring landowners."

**FWP Response:** The Shed's Bridge FAS.

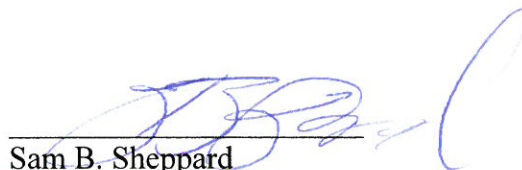
Stabilization of the river bank must take the form of a long range planning effort in collaboration between the neighboring landowners and Gallatin County. A singular action on that state owned portion of river bank must take into consideration the hydrological implications that may significantly impact both up and downstream landowners. As for a limited closure, the river bank continues to erode and parking becomes further limited, possibly forcing vehicles to encroach onto private property. To avoid extending this liability onto the neighboring landowners the practical approach is to close this small and limited site to all vehicular use. The site will continue to be posted warning of an unstable river bank.

## **Decision**

Based on the Environmental Assessment, public comment, and FWP evaluation, it is my decision to proceed with the proposed action, Alternative B as described in the Shed's Bridge Fishing Access Site Proposed Closure Draft Environmental Assessment, with Shed's Bridge FAS remaining closed until such time as an action plan for the river in this area can be implemented to ensure the safety of visitors.

## **Appeal**

This project is subject to appeal, which must be submitted to the FWP Director (Mr. Jeff Hagener, Director, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, PO Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701) in writing and postmarked within 30 days of the date on this decision notice. The appeal must specifically describe the basis for the appeal, explain how the appellant has previously commented to the department or participated in the decision-making process, and lay out how FWP may address the concerns in the appeal. If you have questions regarding this decision notice, please contact Ray Heagney, Fishing Access Site Manager at 406-994-6987.



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Sam B. Sheppard  
Region Three Supervisor

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